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To my daughters, Irina and Ioana

Ecaterina Stela Dragan

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Preface

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the advanced techniques employed to create specialized sorbents with a wide range of functions, which can be used to enhance the separation and/or purification of useful bioactive species like proteins and cells, heavy metal ions, dyes, etc. It illustrates some of the most efficient materials promoted in recent decades for the separation processes. The main purpose of this book is to update the scientific information in a field of research that is growing dynamically. Thus, the latest information in the field of separation processes by specialized sorbents like monolith cryogels, composite hydrogels, magnetic composite adsorbents, metal-impregnated ion exchangers, molecularly imprinted polymers, and solid phase extraction by mixed mode sorbents are presented and compared with the authors' results. Biobased polymer composites occupy a unique place in the dynamic world of new sorbents, and this book provides novel information on them. Readers will get updated information and an in-depth perspective on the design strategies, characterization, and application of novel sorbents. The material will also help researchers in the design of their projects on specialized sorbents for the separation and/or purification of ionic species. The chapters in this book have been contributed by a team of renowned scientists from around the world whose expertise will enlarge the visibility of some of the most effective sorbents and will provide readers an overall view on the efficiency of different separation techniques.

Chapter 1 presents composite hydrogel materials consisting of cross-linked homo- and copolymers of acrylamide and N-isopropylacrylamide with embedded clay minerals, metal nanoparticles, drugs, and proteins. Special attention has been paid to the metal complexes of linear polyampholytes, cross-linked polybetaines, and macroporous amphoteric gels. Molecularly and ion-imprinted polymers focusing on selective recovery of transition and rare earth metal ions are presented. The potential applications of composite hydrogel materials in the oil industry for cleaning the internal surface of main pipes, in catalysis as metal nanoparticles immobilized within hydrogel matrices, and in medicine and biotechnology as controlled release of drugs and proteins are also outlined.

The progress during recent decades in the field of affinity chromatography is presented in Chapter 2. Affinity chromatography is a very efficient method of protein purification. Recently, dye-ligand affinity chromatography and immobilized metal affinity separation have gained considerable attention in the purification of proteins, both in laboratory and large-scale applications, assuring higher specificity, purity, and recovery in a single chromatographic step, as well as cost efficiency and safety. Lately, cryogel materials have been considered as a novel generation of stationary phases in separation science. They have proven to be highly efficient in protein purification with many advantages, including large pores, short diffusion path, low pressure drop, and very short residence time for both adsorption and elution. These unique features make them attractive matrices for the chromatography of biomolecules, viruses, plasmids, and even whole cells.

Monoliths are uniform matrices without interparticular voids, having significant importance as a stationary phase in different modes of chromatography. The pores in monoliths form interconnected channels across the matrix, which provides high permeability for the convective flow of the mobile phase and a large surface area for the binding of analytes. The advantages of macroporous monoliths are discussed in Chapter 3. Macroporous monoliths can be composed of silica, polymer, metal oxides, and carbon-based materials. Unlike conventional columns, they can easily be chemically modified, and a single monolith can have different functionalities in the separation of many analytes. Macroporous monolithic matrices provide fast, efficient, and easy separation of large biomolecules such as proteins, nucleic acids, bacteria, mammalian cells, or particulate matter with low mass transfer resistance. This chapter describes the different types of monoliths and their working principles and applications in particulate/cell separations.

Over the last decade, a special area of focus has been the removal of heavy metals and dyes from the environment because of their nonbiodegradability and long-term toxicity, which make them very dangerous for human health. Biosorbents derived from polysaccharides like chitosan and alginate attracted a strong interest as a cost-effective alternative to the existing sorbents like activated carbon and synthetic ion exchangers. Due to high adsorption capacity, chitosan and alginate have been extensively used as biosorbents in wastewater remediation. The advantages and perspectives of using specialized polysaccharide-based composites in the removal of heavy metals and dyes are presented in Chapters 4 through 6 and in Chapters 9 and 11.

Traditional hydrogels from synthetic and/or natural polymers often have some limitations, such as low mechanical stability and poor biodegradability, which restrict their practical applications. Recently, polysaccharide-based composite hydrogels, a new group of materials at the interface of hydrogels, polymer/clay nanocomposites, and polysaccharides, have attracted much attention due to their unique properties. The latest developments on this type of hydrogels are reviewed in Chapter 4. The applications of novel composite hydrogels in the removal of pollutants, including heavy metals, dyes, and ammonium nitrogen in water, are reviewed. Due to the synergistic effect among polysaccharides, vinyl monomers, and clay minerals, many of the physicochemical properties, such as swelling ratio and rate, thermostability, and gel strength of composite hydrogels, are superior to their counterparts.

Chapter 5 is focused on the sorption of heavy metals by magnetic adsorbent particles, the so-called magnetic beads. The facile separation of magnetic sorbents from the aqueous phase is the main advantage, which differentiates them from the traditional adsorbents. Their efficient removal in a magnetic field followed by regeneration and reuse decreases the overall cost of water treatment. Due to their high applicative potential, composite materials containing iron oxide incorporated in functional polymeric supports are intensely studied. This chapter presents recent developments in the very important field of the magnetic separation of heavy metals by composite biosorbents.

Synthesis and characterization of some biosorbents based on chitosan, alginate, and cellulose, as biopolymer matrix, embedded with synthetic or natural zeolites and their applications for the removal of heavy metal ions and the separation of aqueous–organic mixtures are summarized in Chapter 6. Removal of dyes by chitosan–zeolite

composites are also discussed. The sorption capacities and the pervaporation separation performances of biopolymer–zeolite composites are compared with those of raw zeolite, pristine biopolymer, or other biopolymer-based composites.

In recent decades, the wastewater treatment industry has identified the discharge of nutrients, including phosphates and nitrates, into waterways as a risk to natural environments due to the serious effects of eutrophication of the water bodies. An abundance of algal blooming in eutrophic water bodies can deplete dissolved oxygen in water, causing fish deaths. Accordingly, it is necessary and urgent to explore effective techniques for phosphate removal from wastewater. The development and performance of new phosphate-selective sorbents, referred to as hybrid anion exchangers (HAIX), are presented in Chapter 7. HAIX combines the durability and mechanical strength of polymeric anion exchange resins with the high sorption affinity of hydrated ferric oxide toward phosphate.

Different chemicals like medicines, pesticides, plastics components, or industry pollutants, all toxic to the endocrine system, are found in natural waters. These substances are poorly removed from solutions by conventional methods. The use of molecularly imprinted polymers offers the possibility of removing them as they have a high affinity and selectivity toward templates. Chapter 8 presents the methods of synthesis of such sorbents with a focus on their use in hybrid systems, which seems to be a promising alternative for the removal of endocrine-disrupting compounds.

Chapter 9 describes the sorption mechanisms and performances of biopolymers (chitosan and alginate) as a function of the type of functional groups, the pH, the composition of the solution, as well as the size and morphology of particles. Sorption may proceed through chelation/complexation, ion exchange/electrostatic attraction, or the formation of a ternary complex. The choice of the biopolymer depends on the target metal and the metal speciation. The versatility of these materials is of great interest for developing novel sorbents with improved diffusion properties, enhanced hydrodynamic behavior, and innovative application modes. In addition, these biopolymers can be used for encapsulating reactive compounds (ionic liquids, extractants, ion exchangers) in order to improve the reactivity, selectivity, or sorption efficiency of these materials, profiting from the possibility to condition these composite sorbents under different forms (beads, membranes, foams, etc.). Hybrid materials (e.g., metal-loaded biopolymers) can also be used to design new materials and new applications. Some examples are discussed that show how biopolymers can be given fresh life after metal binding.

Mixed-mode polymeric sorbents that enhance selectivity and capacity of extraction in a single material are described in Chapter 10. Different aspects of these materials are described, including their synthesis, morphological and chemical properties, as well as their application in solid-phase extractions (SPE). SPE protocols for each type of mixed-mode sorbents (strong/weak and cation/anion-exchange materials) are also discussed, since the protocols are crucial for the success of this kind of material. Applications of sorbents in different types of matrices are presented compared with commercial sorbents.

Single-network hydrogels have poor mechanical properties and slow responses at swelling. Various strategies, including the preparation of interpenetrating polymer

network (IPN) hydrogels, have therefore been developed to remediate these weak points. The most significant classes of IPN composite hydrogels and their applications, mainly in the separation processes of dyes, heavy metal ions, and liquids, are presented in Chapter 11. Synthesis parameters such as cross-linker ratio, monomer concentration, and synthesis temperature are the key factors that determine the properties of the semi-IPN and IPN hydrogels, such as interior morphology, swelling kinetics, mechanical strength, etc. Sorption kinetics and reusability of IPN composite hydrogels are further enhanced by the synthesis of IPN hydrogels under the freezing temperature of the solvent (cryogels).

A rational approach for building molecular channels in hybrid organic–inorganic materials via the inorganic (sol–gel) transcription of dynamic self-assembled superstructures is presented in Chapter 12. The basic and specific molecular information encoded in the molecular precursors results in the generation of tubular superstructures in solution and in a solid state, which can be frozen in a polymeric hybrid matrix by the sol–gel process. These systems have been successfully employed to design solid dense membranes that function as ion channels and to illustrate how a self-organized hybrid material performs interesting and potentially useful transporting functions.

Furthermore, the book contains numerous illustrations and tables that will guide readers in advanced separation procedures. In conclusion, this book focuses on a variety of advanced techniques available for separation and/or purification of target ionic species and addresses the needs and challenges for future research in this growing field.

Editor

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1 Composite Hydrogel Materials

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

At present, composite hydrogel materials have attracted considerable interest in research and industrial spheres (Kudaibergenov et al. 2007, Pavlyuchenko and Ivanchev 2009). Composite polymer hydrogels consist of at least two components that exhibit a synergistic effect. According to the canons of thermodynamic compatibility, there are many possible structures of composite hydrogels starting from complete phase separation and ending to formation of structures consisting of polymer matrix and nano-, micro-, and macrosized inclusions. The nature of interaction between the components can have covalent, ionic, and donor–acceptor character and can be stabilized by hydrogen bonds, hydrophobic interactions, and entanglement of macromolecular chains producing interpenetrating and semi-interpenetrating polymer networks (IPNs) (Wu et al. 2006, Zhang et al. 2005). Due to their composite structure and unique properties such as improved mechanical, thermal, electrical, and optical characteristics, they have been found to have a wide application in medicine, membrane technology, optical engineering, and catalysis (Frimpong et al. 2006, Lao and Ramanujan 2004, Lu et al. 2003, Serksen et al. 2000, 2005). This chapter is devoted to composite hydrogel materials based on cross-linked homo- and copolymers of acrylamide (AAm) and *N*-isopropylacrylamide (NIPA) within which inorganic nano- and microparticles, polymer-protected metal nanoparticles, proteins, drugs, and low-molecular-weight ligands are immobilized. Physicochemical, physicomachanical, and catalytic properties and volume-phase transition (VPT) of composite hydrogel materials have been studied. Application aspects of composite hydrogel materials in oil industry and catalysis, for wastewater purification, and as drug delivery systems are also outlined.

1.2 IMMOBILIZATION OF NANO- AND MICROSIZED CLAY MINERALS INTO THE HYDROGEL MATRIX

1.2.1 PREPARATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF ORGANIC–INORGANIC COMPOSITE MATERIALS BASED ON POLY(ACRYLAMIDE) HYDROGELS AND CLAY MINERALS

The properties of hydrogels can be modified by embedding inorganic materials, such as montmorillonite (MMT), bentonite, mica, silica, titanium and aluminum oxides, and sericite, within the gel matrix (Avvaru et al. 1998, Cheng et al. 2007, Kabiri and Zohuriaan-Mehr 2003, Kurokawa and Sasaki 1982, Lee and Yang 2004, Lin et al. 2001, Ray and Okamoto 2003, Starodoubtsev et al. 2000). The pioneering works to strengthen the mechanical properties of gel specimen by adding inorganic components were done by Haraguchi and colleagues (Haraguchi et al. 2003, 2013, Haraguchi and Li 2006, Haraguchi and Takehisa 2002). Gel sample made from MMT and NIPA is elastically stretched to about 10 times its original length (Haraguchi et al. 2002). Osada and colleagues (Gong et al. 2003, Nakayama et al. 2004, Tanaka et al. 2005) designed a series of double-network hydrogels with extremely high mechanical strength. This kind of nanocomposite hydrogel exhibited high transparency, high deswelling rate, and extraordinary mechanical properties with elongation

at break in excess of 10³%. In an organic/inorganic network structure, the clay sheets will act as effective multifunctional cross-linkers through ionic or polar interactions. The layered structure of clay minerals and their ability to swell in water allow monomers and polymer chains to diffuse into clay layers and act as additional cross-linker. The overall stability of composite materials directly depends on whether exfoliation or intercalation process takes place and on the choice of monomer or initiator that can be adsorbed to the clay surface (Abdurrahmanoglu et al. 2008, Essawy 2008, Jia et al. 2008, Xiang et al. 2006). Preparation of lightweight porous materials by templating hydrogels with a range of hydrophilic and hydrophobic scaffolding materials was explored (Rutkevicius et al. 2012). Submillimeter hydrogel slurries of polyacrylamide (PAAm) and gellan gum were templated with aqueous slurries of cement, gypsum, and clay–cement mixtures or alternatively dispersed in curable polydimethylsiloxane. After the solidification of the scaffolding material, the evaporation of a structured hydrogel produced porous composite material whose pores mimic the hydrogel mesostructure. This versatile hydrogel templating method can be applied to yield lightweight porous materials with a great potential for use in the building industry in heat and sound insulation panels, lightweight building blocks, porous rubber substitutes, and foam shock absorbers and as an alternative to aerated concretes. The poly(acrylamide-*co*-acrylate)/rice husk ash hydrogel composites and a series of poly(acrylic acid-*co*-acrylamide)/kaolin composites are applied as soil conditioner and superabsorbent and serve as release carrier of urea fertilizer in agricultural industry (Cândido et al. 2013, Lianga and Liu 2007, Lianga et al. 2007).

The effect of silica nanoparticles on the linear viscoelastic response of model polyacrylamide hydrogel (PAAH) systems was examined (Kalfus et al. 2012). The removal of methylene blue (MB) cationic dye from its aqueous solution was performed with the help of chitosan-*g*-poly(acrylic acid) (CTS-*g*-PAAc)/MMT nanocomposites as adsorbent (Wang et al. 2008). The influence of pH value, MMT content (wt.%), weight ratio (w.r.) of acrylic acid (AAc) to CTS, and adsorption temperature on the adsorption capacity of the nanocomposite was investigated. The results showed that the w.r. of AAc to CTS of the nanocomposites has great influence on adsorption capacities and introducing a small amount of MMT could improve the adsorption ability of the CTS-*g*-PAAc. The adsorption behaviors of the nanocomposite showed that the maximum adsorption capacity is 1859 mg/g for CTS-*g*-PAAc/MMT with 30 wt.% and w.r. of 7.2:1. The desorption studies revealed that the nanocomposite provided the potential for regeneration and reuse after MB dye adsorption. The synthesis of poly(acrylic acid)–bentonite–FeCo (PAAc-B-FeCo) hydrogel nanocomposite via ultrasound-assisted *in situ* emulsion polymerization was carried out (Shirsath et al. 2011). Addition of exfoliated bentonite clay platelets and FeCo increased the strength and stability of the hydrogel and assisted the adsorption of an organic pollutant. The response of the nanocomposite hydrogel was evaluated using a cationic dye, crystal violet under a different temperature, pH, and cavitation environment. The optimum temperature was found to be 35°C, and basic pH at 11 was responsible for the higher adsorption of dye due to dissociation of COO[−] ions at higher pH.

Amphoteric semi-IPN nanocomposite hydrogels were prepared by graft polymerization of AAc onto starch in cationic polyacrylamide (CPAM)/bentonite nanocomposite aqueous dispersion (Xu et al. 2008). CPAM was used as both an intercalating

agent to enlarge interlayer space and a linear polymer chain to fabricate the semi-IPN structure. X-ray diffraction (XRD) and TEM confirmed a successful intercalation of CPAM into bentonite. The results showed that the hydrogel was of a high swelling and compressive strength even under water content of more than 99%.

Highly swollen AAm/2-acrylamido-2-methyl-1-propanesulfonic acid (AMPS) hydrogels and AAm/AMPS/bentonite composite hydrogels were prepared by free radical solution polymerization in aqueous solutions of AAm with AMPS and a clay such as bentonite and a multifunctional cross-linker such as ethylene glycol dimethacrylate (Kundakci et al. 2008). Highly swollen AAm/AMPS and AAm/AMPS/bentonite hydrogels were used in experiments on the sorption of water-soluble monovalent cationic dye such as Lauth's violet (LV) (thionine). Swelling of AAm/AMPS hydrogels was increased up to 2,282%–12,603% in water and 921%–3,575% in LV solutions, while AAm hydrogels swelled 927% in water, and swelling of AAm/AMPS/bentonite hydrogels was increased up to 3,225%–15,421% in water and 1,360%–4,189% in LV solutions, while AAm/bentonite hydrogels swelled 828% in water.

Both clay minerals embedded within neutral or charged hydrogel networks and linear charged macromolecules that stabilize clay minerals exhibit excellent absorbance capacity with respect to metal ions (Saber-Samandari and Gazi 2013) and dye molecules (Nakamura and Ogawa 2013, Shirsath et al. 2013, Yang and Ni 2012) and as a controlled-release drug carrier (Kevadiya et al. 2011). The nanocomposite hydrogels have much greater equilibrium swelling ratio, much faster response rate to pH, excellent thermal responsibility, and significantly improved tensile mechanical properties and high storage modulus (Xiang et al. 2006, Zhang et al. 2009).

The composite hydrogel materials based on clay minerals, TiO_2 , SiO_2 , and PAAH were obtained by one-step *in situ* polymerization (Svetlichnyy et al. 2009a). As a result, the flexible, elastic, and mechanically stable composite materials were designed. Swelling–deswelling behavior, VPT, and physicochemical, physico-mechanical, and thermal properties of composite hydrogels have been studied (Ibrayeva 2010, Zhumaly et al. 2013). The mechanism of formation of the composite structures can be represented as diffusion of AAm monomers into the layered clay structure. After monomer intercalation into the space of minerals and polymerization with simultaneous cross-linking, composite hydrogel materials are formed where nano- and micro-sized clay particles play the role of additional physical cross-linking centers. It leads to a significant increase in mechanical properties of composite materials. The swelling degree of samples increases in the following order: PAAH/bentonite > PAAH/ TiO_2 > PAAH/ SiO_2 > PAAH/kaolin \approx PAAH/MMT. For the PAAH/bentonite, PAAH/kaolin, PAAH/ TiO_2 , and PAAH/ SiO_2 composites, the values of n that are between 0.6 and 0.94 correspond to an anomalous swelling mechanism, for example, non-Fickian diffusion. The effect of water–organic solvent mixture, pH, temperature, and ionic strength on the behavior of the composite materials was studied. Composite materials shrank in water–acetone and water–ethanol mixtures, as well as at high ionic strength of the solution, while changing of pH and temperature has no substantial influence. For the PAAH/kaolin and PAAH/bentonite composite hydrogels, the swelling degree decreased with increasing both the content of methylenebisacrylamide (MBAA) and bentonite, respectively. In the former case, it was connected with increasing of the density of chemical cross-links and,

in the latter case, physical cross-links. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images revealed that the morphology of composite materials is represented as flat surface, cracks, and micropores with an average diameter of 5–10 μm . The XRD patterns are characterized by amorphous halo from PAAH followed by smaller peaks from clay minerals that are embedded within hydrogel matrix. The Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) and Raman spectroscopy results revealed that composite materials have not been simply a mechanical mixture of two components; in contrast, they were stabilized by hydrogen bonds between NH_2 groups of PAAH and oxygen groups of TiO_2 , SiO_2 , and aluminosilicates. The positive values of the enthalpy of mixing ΔH_m indicated that the swelling of PAAH/kaolin and PAAH/ TiO_2 in water had endothermic character. It was shown that the thermal decomposition of composite hydrogel materials was shifted to a higher-temperature region in comparison with PAAH. The increase of kaolin quantity in PAAH volume led to reinforcing of mechanical properties of composite materials.

1.2.2 POTENTIAL APPLICATION OF COMPOSITE HYDROGEL MATERIALS AS “PIGS” FOR CLEANING OF THE INTERNAL SURFACE OF MAIN PIPES

Pipelines are used to transport the powders and fluids from one point to another. Pigging is an operation to remove debris or unwanted deposit buildup in a pipeline (Al-Yaari 2011, Jaggard and Allen 1977, Uzu et al. 2000). Debris, sand, and asphaltene–resin–paraffin depositions (ARPDs) in a pipeline will result in a pressure buildup, and if no pigging exists, their buildup could continue to rise and will create greater back pressure on the line, causing higher maintenance on pumps, and the line could eventually become blocked. It is forecasted that the composite hydrogel materials may bear more external load than that of pure hydrogel. In contrast to ordinary hydrogels, the composite materials consisting of hydrogels and clay minerals exhibit an improved physicommechanical property (Ibrayeva 2010, Svetlichnyy et al. 2009b). The mechanical stability of the PAAH/kaolin sample in comparison with pure PAAH is shown in Figure 1.1.

The laboratory device for study of the model oil pipeline is as follows: A slightly swollen hydrogel plunger (not miscible with oil) is immersed into the pipeline to

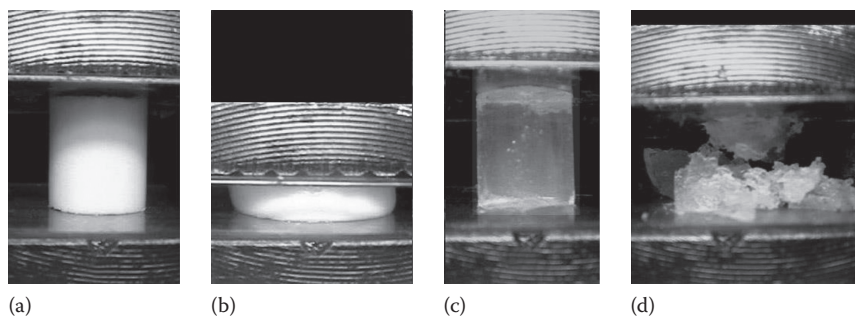


FIGURE 1.1 Mechanical stability of PAAH/kaolin composite (a, b) and pristine PAAH (c, d) gels.

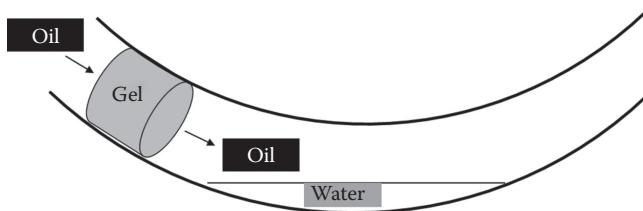


FIGURE 1.2 Schematic representation of cleaning of inner part of pipeline from APRD and water by hydrogel “pigs.”

separate the oil flow. As the hydrogel “pig” moves along the pipe, it absorbs the water–saline solution and swells. The hydrogel swelling allows tight hydraulic sealing to the pipe wall. This, in turn, leads to efficient removal of gas accumulations, APRD, mechanical impurities, and mineralized water from the pipeline inner cavity (Figure 1.2).

In cleaning a model pipeline from APRD, the PAAH/kaolin composite hydrogel that showed the best elongation at break, tensile strength, and Young’s modulus at 15 wt.% of kaolin was used (Zheksebayeva et al. 2012). The effectiveness of cleaning of deposited paraffins from Kumkol and Usen oil fields by composite hydrogel “pigs” ranges between 94% and 96% (Kudaibergenov et al. 2012a).

1.3 PHYSICOCHEMICAL AND CATALYTIC PROPERTIES OF POLYMER-PROTECTED AND HYDROGEL-IMMOBILIZED GOLD, SILVER, AND PALLADIUM NANOPARTICLES

1.3.1 STABILIZATION OF GOLD AND SILVER NANOPARTICLES BY HYDROPHILIC POLYMERS

Gold (AuNPs) and silver (AgNPs) nanoparticles have attracted significant attention of researchers due to their unique optical, electrical, biomedical, and catalytic properties (Balasubramanian et al. 2010, Motoyuki and Hidehiro 2009, Shan and Tenhu 2007, Zhou et al. 2009). A lot of polymers possessing nonionic (Chung et al. 2012, Dai et al. 2007, Morrow et al. 2009, Ram et al. 2011), anionic (Dorris et al. 2008), cationic (Chen et al. 2012a), and amphoteric (Li et al. 2010, Mahltig et al. 2010, Note et al. 2007) nature are widely used as protecting agents of AuNPs and AgNPs in aqueous solution or organic solvents for preventing nanoparticle aggregation (Bekturov et al. 2010, Ibrayeva et al. 2013).

The size of poly(*N*-vinylpyrrolidone) (PVP)-protected AuNPs ranging from 10 to 110 nm was easily controlled by varying the concentration (0.01–10 g/dL) (Ram et al. 2011) or the average-number molecular weight of PVP ($M_n = 10\text{--}350$ kDa) (Yesmurzayeva et al. 2013). The shape, size, and optical properties of the AuNPs and AgNPs are tuned by changing the employed PVP/metal salt ratio (Hoppe et al. 2006). It is proposed that PVP acts as the reducing agent suffering a partial degradation during the nanoparticle synthesis. Two possible mechanisms are proposed to explain the reduction step: direct hydrogen abstraction induced by the metal ion and/or reducing action of macroradicals formed during degradation of the polymer. The initial formation of

the macroradicals might be associated with the metal-accelerated decomposition of low amounts of peroxides present in the commercial polymer. Gold catalysts have recently attracted rapidly growing interests due to their potential applicabilities to many reactions of both industrial and environmental importance (Haruta 1997). Typical examples are the low-temperature catalytic combustion, partial oxidation of hydrocarbons, hydrogenation of carbon oxides and unsaturated hydrocarbons, and reduction of nitrogen oxides (Haruta and Daté 2001). A recent review (Shiju and Gulianti 2009) describes the size-, shape-, structure-, and composition-dependent behavior of AuNPs employed in alkylation, dehydrogenation, hydrogenation, and selective oxidation reactions for the conversion of hydrocarbons (with main emphasis on fossil resources) to chemicals. The perspectives of substituting platinum group metals for automobile emission control with gold were outlined by authors (Zhang et al. 2011).

1.3.2 IMMOBILIZATION OF POLYMER-PROTECTED AUNPS AND AGNPS WITHIN HYDROGEL MATRIX

Hydrogels are chemically stable and interlocked polymeric networks that retain vast amounts of water without dissolving; therefore, they are feasible for the preparation of metal nanoparticles *in situ* and readily applicable in the catalysis of various aquatic and nonaquatic reactions. The functional groups in the hydrogel network can act as both chelating and capping agents for metal nanoparticle preparation from metal ions and for their stabilization; thus, the metal particles are protected from the atmosphere hindering the oxidation/deactivation and aggregation, allowing an increase in their stability and longevity. Various synthesis methods have been reported to produce AuNPs–hydrogel composites (Dolya et al. 2013): (1) preparation of the nanoparticles and hydrogels, separate or in combination (Pardo-Yissar et al. 2001, Sheeney-Hai-Ichia et al. 2002); (2) mixing and polymerization of the preformed nanoparticles with monomer precursor(s) (Holtz and Asher 1997, Lee and Braun 2003, Sershen et al. 2000, 2001, Weissman et al. 1996); and (3) embedding of metal salts into a hydrogel matrix followed by a reduction process in the presence of reducing agents (Wang et al. 2004). The role of hydrophilic polymers in this system is to stabilize the metal nanoparticles and to prevent their aggregation, while the role of hydrogel matrix is restriction of diffusion of nanoparticles both inside of and outside from the gel matrix (Kudaibergenov 2008). A typical example of embedding of PVP-protected AuNPs, AgNPs, and palladium nanoparticles (PdNPs) within the hydrogel matrix is shown in Figure 1.3.

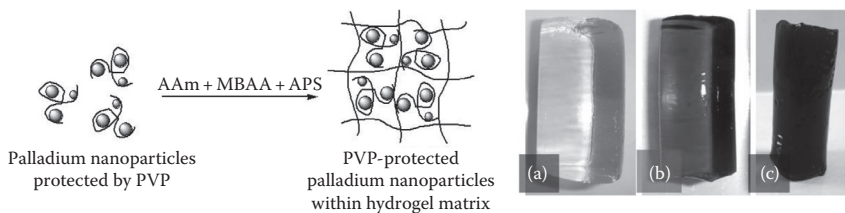


FIGURE 1.3 Immobilization protocol of polymer-protected nanoparticles within hydrogel matrix and PAAH samples with immobilized AgNPs (a), AuNPs (b), and PdNPs (c).

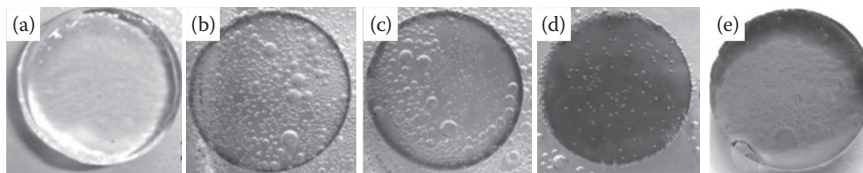


FIGURE 1.4 Swollen in water PAAH/PEI- HAuCl_4 (a) in the course of reduction by NaBH_4 ($C = 0.1 \text{ mol/L}$) during 5 min (b), 15 min (c), 60 min (d), and 1 day (e).

The average size of AgNPs, AuNPs, and PdNPs in the volume of PAAH was equal to 20–30, 10–50, and 10–60 nm, respectively (Kudaibergenov et al. 2008). Metal ions with different oxidation states to be loaded into the hydrogel matrices can be reduced/precipitated to their metallic particle forms inside hydrogels of different dimensions using green chemicals or nontoxic chemical reducing agents such as NaBH_4 , H_2 , citrate, and ethylene glycol, depending upon the nature of the metal ions. Reduction of polyethyleneimine (PEI) protected and immobilized within PAAH AuNPs by NaBH_4 is shown in Figure 1.4 (Dolya 2009).

Reduction of PEI-Au^{3+} complexes to Au^0 within hydrogels is accompanied by the formation of a thin, colored layer on the gel surface that gradually moves into the gel volume. The driving force of this process is the constant diffusion of the reducing agent NaBH_4 deeply into the gel volume. Narrow-dispersed gold nanospheres and single crystals were prepared, respectively, by reducing HAuCl_4 within the hydrogel matrix (Kim and Lee 2007, Zhang et al. 2007). The authors (Kim and Lee 2007) described a unique strategy to prepare discrete composite nanoparticles consisting of a large gold core (60–150 nm) surrounded by a thermoresponsive hydrogel derived from the polymerization of NIPA or copolymerization with AAc. The growth of AuNPs in the presence of preformed spherical hydrogel particles allows a precise control of the size of composite nanoparticles between 200 and 550 nm. Most of the hydrogel-immobilized PdNPs exhibited good catalytic activity in both Heck and Suzuki reactions (Hagiwara et al. 2001, Kohler et al. 2001) and Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling reaction (Leadbeater and Marco 2002, Lu et al. 2004, Phan et al. 2004, Sivudu et al. 2008, Wu et al. 2011).

1.3.3 CATALYTIC PROPERTIES OF POLYMER-PROTECTED PdNPs AND AuNPs IMMOBILIZED WITHIN HYDROGELS

The combination of natural catalytic abilities with the *in situ* metal nanocatalyst preparation capability makes hydrogels indispensable multifunctional materials for unique applications (Jiang et al. 2004, Kidambi et al. 2004, Metin et al. 2009, Sahiner 2004, Wunder et al. 2011). The recent review (Sahiner 2013) summarizes application aspects of metal nanoparticles within hydrogel templates in catalysis. Of special interest are the homo- and copolymers of NIPA that undergo a sharp volume transition around the body temperature (Peppas et al. 2006). Many researchers have examined the potential application of NIPA-based polymers for the immobilization of AuNPs (Echeverria and Mijangos 2010, Wang et al. 2004a,b).

Examples of catalytic system acting by “on-off” mechanism are NIPA-based hydrogels that reversibly swell or shrink in water–ethanol mixture (Wang et al. 2000) or reversibly turn “off” first and then “on” as the temperature is first raised and then lowered (Bergbreiter et al. 1998). The “smart” behavior of the PNIPA/PVP-Pd(0) system was demonstrated in the course of allyl alcohol hydrogenation (Dolya 2009, Dolya et al. 2008a,b, 2009). Swelling–deswelling of PNIPA at temperature interval 25°C–40°C causes the release or inflow of PVP-Pd(0) outside or inside of the hydrogel matrix. This in turn leads to periodic increase or decrease of the hydrogenation rate of allyl alcohol (Figure 1.5).

The catalytic activity of polymer-protected and PAAH-immobilized Pd(0) catalysts increased in the following order: PAAH/PVA-Pd(0) > PAAH/PVP-Pd(0) > PAAH/PEI-Pd(0) > PAAH/PAA-Pd(0). The catalytic activity of PAAH/PEI-Pd(0), PAAH/PVP-Pd(0), and PAAH/PVA-Pd(0) catalysts preserved up to hydrogenation of 12 sequential portions of allyl alcohol (Zharmagambetova et al. 2010). Turnover numbers (TONs) for PAAH/PEI-Pd(0) and PAAH/PVP-Pd(0) were equal to 4×10^3

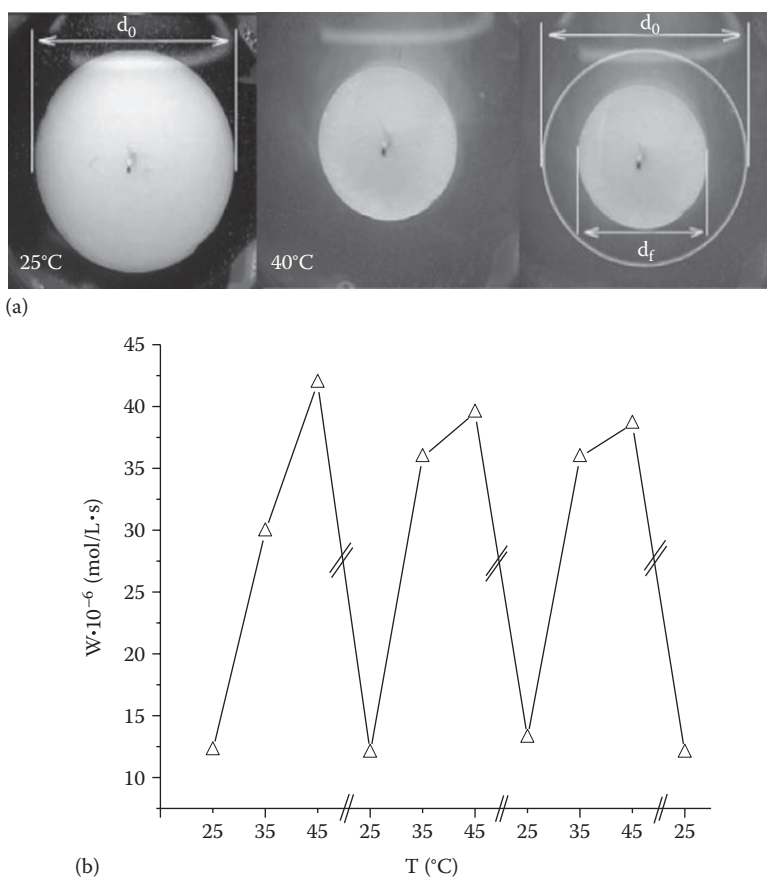


FIGURE 1.5 Reversible changing of size (a) and catalytic activity of PNIPA/PVP-Pd(0) (b) at 25 h 40°C.

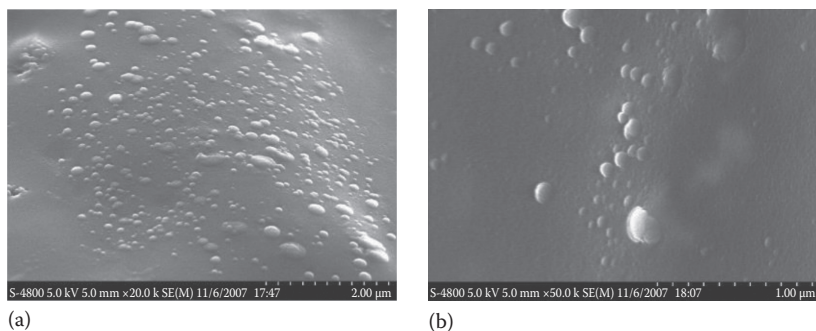


FIGURE 1.6 SEM pictures of PVP-protected PdNPs within the gel matrix of PAAH after hydrogenation of the 1st (a) and 12th (b) successive portions of allyl alcohol.

and 7×10^3 , respectively, indicating a stable and long-lived behavior of catalysts. After hydrogenation of sequential portions of allyl alcohol, the amount of Pd(0) on the surface of gel matrix is considerably reduced (Figure 1.6). This is probably due to leaching out of Pd nanoparticles in the course of hydrogenation reaction. The average size of Pd nanoparticles was less than 100 nm, although the bigger aggregated particles were observed, while SEM micrographs of pristine PAAH/PVP-Pd(0) show spheres with an average diameter of about 60 nm that are related to PVP-stabilized spherical PdNPs or particle aggregates.

The catalytic activity of gel-immobilized AuNPs was evaluated with respect to hydrogen peroxide decomposition. The influence of (1) substrate concentration ($C = 10\text{--}40$ wt.%) at constant temperature ($T = 328$ K) and constant mass of catalyst ($m_{\text{cat}} = 30$ mg), (2) temperature ($T = 308\text{--}323$ K) at constant substrate concentration ($[\text{H}_2\text{O}_2] = 30$ wt.%) and constant mass of catalyst ($m_{\text{cat}} = 30$ mg), and (3) mass of catalyst ($m_{\text{cat}} = 15\text{--}50$ mg) at constant temperature ($T = 328$ K) and constant substrate concentration ($[\text{H}_2\text{O}_2] = 30$ wt.%) on the decomposition rate of H_2O_2 was studied. In each experiment, the volume of substrate was kept constant and equal to 1 mL.

The catalytic activity of gel-immobilized AuNPs was much lower than that deposited on metal oxides. This is probably accounted for the less accessibility of catalytic centers in gel matrix to substrate molecules, for example, entrapment of polymer-protected AuNPs within hydrogel networks may restrict the diffusion of substrate inside of the gel.

1.4 DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEMS BASED ON CROSS-LINKED COPOLYMERS OF ACRYLAMIDE AND N-ISOPROPYLACRYLAMIDE

Immobilization of biologically active substances, such as drugs, proteins, DNA, enzymes, and living cells, within stimuli-responsive hydrogels is of great interest for medicine, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and bio- and genetic engineering (Hoffman and Stayton 2004, Lee and Yuk 2007, Liu et al. 2007, Peppas et al. 2006, Rzaev et al. 2007, Stein 2009). One of the serious problems of modern medicine is

transportation of biologically and physiologically active substances to target places of organisms in a strictly definite dose. Presently, about 25% of drugs of leading pharmaceutical companies prepared for selling, production, and application are provided by transportation system. Hydrogel materials, due to excellent swellability in water, softness, elasticity, and biological compatibility, are widely applied for the design of drug delivery systems that are able to transport drugs to a target part of an organism by realization of positive feedback with environment providing afterward more reliable and controlled treatment of diseases (Anish and Abdul 2012, Eros et al. 2003, Galaev and Mattiasson 1999, Kumar et al. 2007, Manpreet et al. 2013). Among the well-known hydrogel systems of synthetic origin, the homo- and copolymers of AAc and NIPA are able to change morphology, size, and shape under the action of external stimuli (Bajpai et al. 2008, Feng et al. 2010, Hoare and Kohane 2008, Jagur-Grodzinski 2010, Qiu and Park 2012). pH medium and body temperature changes are the most widely used triggering signals for both site-specific therapy and pulsatile drug release (Anil 2007, Bajpai et al. 2008, Coughlan et al. 2004, Liusheng et al. 2011, Yoshida et al. 2013). In this connection, the development of thermo- and pH-responsive hydrogel materials that might realize “on-off” mechanism of drug delivery, that is, opening and closing the “thermo- or pH valve” to deliver the dosed amount of drug to the diseased part of the body, presents great interest (Chen et al. 2012b). The most significant weakness of external stimuli-sensitive hydrogels is that their response time is too slow. Therefore, the fast-acting hydrogels are necessary, and the easiest way of achieving that goal is to make thinner and smaller hydrogels. A method for making thermally responsive hydrogel scaffolds with a remarkably rapid response to temperature changes was developed by Cho et al. (2008). The recent remarkable review of Klinger and Landfester (2012) presents some of the important fundamental examinations on the influence of (tunable) network characteristics on loading and release profiles and basic synthetic concepts to realize these concepts and highlights several examples of different approaches to stimuli-responsive microgels for loading and release applications.

1.4.1 HYDROGEL-IMMOBILIZED LOCAL ANESTHETIC DRUGS

Immobilization of local anesthetic drugs, such as lidocaine, novocaine, and bupivacaine, into stimuli-responsive hydrogel matrix is very important to solve the problems of “medicine of catastrophe” when first aid is needed after an earthquake and fire. Hydrogel-immobilized local anesthetic drugs can serve as wound dressing materials due to their versatility and unique properties, such as high water content and soft and rubbery consistency, that make them similar to natural tissues. Literature survey shows that lidocaine was loaded within IPNs based on PNIPA, PVP, and AMPS (Akdemir and Kayaman-Apohan 2007) and NIPA–itaconic acid (IA) copolymeric hydrogels (Taşdelen et al. 2004) by sorption immobilization. Lidocaine uptake of the IPNs was found to increase from 24 to 166 (mg lidocaine/g dry gel) with increasing amount of AMPS contents in the IPN structure, while lidocaine adsorption capacity of the NIPA-IA hydrogels was found to increase from 3.6 to 862.1 (mg lidocaine/g dry gel) with increasing amount of IA in the gel structure. In both cases, the electrostatic interactions between anionic groups of hydrogels and cationic groups of lidocaine are

responsible for retarding drug release profile. The release characteristics of lidocaine from an anionic hydrogel composed of carbopol and a cationic hydrogel composed of chitosan were examined for optimizing hydrogel formulation as a sponge filler to stop the bleeding and as a carrier for delivering lidocaine to relief pain after a tooth extraction (Liu et al. 2007). The elasticity of the gel matrix and the ionic complexing effect between the anionic acid groups of hydrogels and cationic groups of lidocaine are two main factors influencing regulation of the diffusion coefficient for controlling drug release. Spherical nanoparticulate drug carriers made of poly(D,L-lactic acid) (Gorner et al. 1999, Polakovič et al. 1999) and of poly(D,L-lactic-co-glycolic acid) 50:50 mol/mol (Holgado et al. 2008, Zhang et al. 2008) with controlled size were designed for encapsulation of lidocaine and bupivacaine. Particles with sizes in the range of 250–820 nm and low polydispersity were prepared with good reproducibility; the large particles with a high loading ($\sim 30\%$) showed under *in vitro* conditions a slow release over 24–30 h, the medium-sized carriers (loading of $\sim 13\%$) released the drug over about 15 h, and the small particles with small loading ($\sim 7\%$) exhibited a rapid release over a couple of hours. Two simple models, diffusion and dissolution, were applied for the description of the experimental data of lidocaine release and for the identification of the release mechanisms for the nanoparticles of different drug loading. The modeling results showed that in the case of high drug loadings (about 30% w/w), where the whole drug or a large part of it was in the crystallized form, the crystal dissolution could be the step determining the release rate. On the other hand, the drug release was diffusion controlled at low loadings ($<10\%$ w/w) where the solid drug was randomly dispersed in the matrix. The estimated values of the diffusion coefficient of lidocaine in these particles were in the range of $(5-7) \times 10^{-20} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$. The efficacy and toxicity of bupivacaine loaded in biodegradable polymer poly(sebacic-co-ricinoleic acid) for producing motor and sensory block when injected near the sciatic nerve were evaluated (Shikanov et al. 2007). *In vitro* and *in vivo* bupivacaine release after injection in mice showed that 70% of the drug has been released during 1 week. Single injection of 10% bupivacaine in the polymer caused motor and sensory block that lasted 30 h. It was concluded that the poly(sebacic-co-ricinoleic acid) is a safe carrier for prolonged activity of bupivacaine. Richlocaine and richlocaine hemisuccinate are new local anesthetic drugs, invented by Kazakhstan chemists, that have been registered and approved for use in CIS countries (Sharifkanov et al. 2011) (Figure 1.7). In medicine, richlocaine is applied only as an isotonic injection solution. The anesthetic and antibacterial effectiveness of richlocaine is much higher than that of bupivacaine, novocaine, and lidocaine.

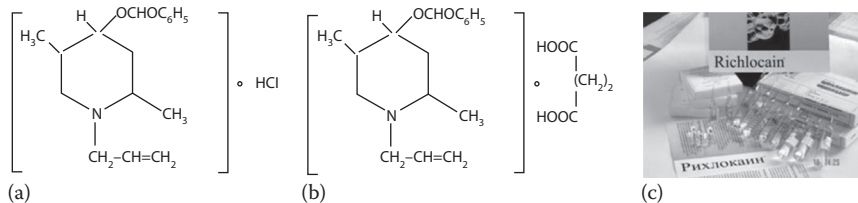


FIGURE 1.7 Structural formulas of (a) richlocaine, (b) richlocaine hemisuccinate, and (c) richlocaine as an injection solution.

Development of a prolonged drug dosage form would be beneficial. Richlocaine was immobilized into linear and weakly cross-linked PVP (Makysh et al. 2003), poly(sodium acrylate) (PSA), and betaine-type polyampholyte gels (Makysh et al. 2002). The properties of polymer–drug complexes were studied with respect to external factors, such as pH, temperature, and thermodynamic quality of water–ethanol mixture. The kinetics of richlocaine release from the PVP gel matrix into water was studied. At pH = 7.0, ~20% of richlocaine was released within 96 h. This quantity remained constant up to 384 h, indicating poor desorption of richlocaine. Comparatively, complexes of richlocaine with PSA and betaine-type polyampholyte gels displayed better desorption; the degree of release of richlocaine reached ~95% within 144 h and ~80% within 260 h, respectively. The quantity of released richlocaine increased up to 50% at pH = 8.0, obviously indicating the destruction of the PVP gel–richlocaine complex at this pH. The activation energies of drug release from the PVP gel matrix, PSA gel, and betaine-type polyampholyte gel were equal to 6.86, 5.26, and 17.14 kJ/mol, respectively. The effect of richlocaine on the swelling/deswelling kinetics and pulsatile drug release from the thermoresponsive hydrogels such as weakly cross-linked copolymers of AAm-AAc, hydrogels of PNIPA, and 3D networks of NIPA-AAc and NIPA-AMPSA was examined (Tatykhanova 2009). The richlocaine release profile exhibits a similar trend with the swelling–deswelling behavior of hydrogels (Figure 1.8). The initial release of the drug is due to the presence of surface-encapsulated components that are squeezed out during the first temperature pulse. The release of richlocaine at $T < \text{VPTT}$ is governed by diffusion. At $T > \text{VPTT}$, the surface of the hydrogel shrunk immediately and formed an impermeable “skin” layer restricting the release of immobilized bioactive molecules. The second and third temperature pulses lead to the decrease of the release rate due to the decrease in the concentration of richlocaine in the hydrogel volume.

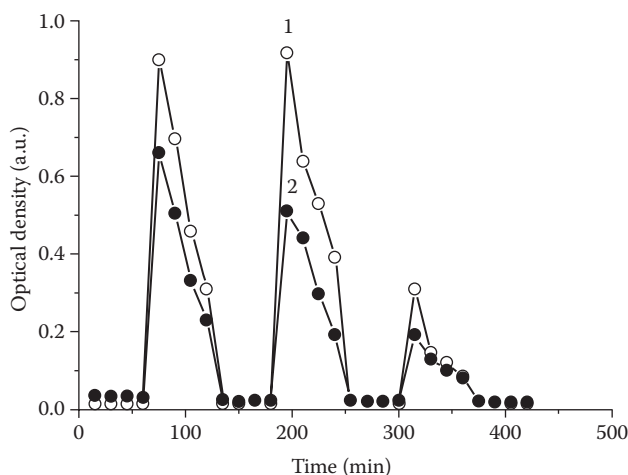


FIGURE 1.8 Time-dependent pulsatile release of richlocaine from PNIPAM hydrogel into phosphate buffer (1) and water (2) at 25°C and 40°C.

1.4.2 CONTROLLED RELEASE OF PROTEINS FROM STIMULI-RESPONSIVE HYDROGELS

The use of stimuli-sensitive hydrogels for the encapsulation and controlled release of proteins has received significant attention. The release of bovine serum albumin (BSA), a model drug, from a series of thermosensitive silk sericin (SS)/PNIPA and pH-responsive SS/poly(methacrylic acid) IPN hydrogels has been studied (Wen et al. 2013). The pulsatile releasing behavior of IPN hydrogels revealed that they can be made into microcapsules or thermo valves, which act as an on-off release control.

An efficient strategy to conjugate methacrylamide moieties to the lysine units of lysozyme for copolymerization and subsequent triggered release from hydrogels has been developed (Verheyen et al. 2011). Methacrylated dextran (dex-MA) was polymerized in the presence of native or modified lysozyme to yield hydrogels. The release of native and modified lysozyme from dex-MA hydrogels was studied in acetate buffer (pH 5, in the absence of any trigger), and only a minor fraction (~15%) of the modified lysozyme was released, whereas ~74% of the native lysozyme was released.

Horseradish peroxidase and alkaline phosphatase were immobilized into cellulose hydrogel prepared from an aqueous alkali-urea solvent (Isobe et al. 2011). Proteins were covalently introduced to cellulose gel by a Schiff base formation between the aldehyde and the amino groups of proteins and stabilized by a reduction of imines. The number of oxidized glucose per 100 glucose residues ranged between 3.3 and 18.6. The activity of the immobilized enzymes increased with aldehyde content, but the effect leveled off at a low degree of oxidation, at approximately 8.1 of oxidized glucose/100 glucose unit. The amount of immobilized peroxidase calculated from the activity was 8.0 ng/g for an aldehyde content of 0.18 mmol/g and 14.6 ng/g for both 0.46 and 1.04 mmol/g. Due to the high mechanical and chemical stability of cellulose, this technique and resulting materials are potentially useful in biochemical processing and sensing technologies.

Shi et al. (2008) studied the pH-sensitive release of lysozyme from the poly(*N*-vinyl formamide) nanogels ~100 nm in diameter. Approximately 95% of lysozyme encapsulated in nanogels released over 200 min at pH 5.8 compared to only ~15% released at pH 7.4.

β -Galactosidase was immobilized in a cross-linked PNIPA-AAc hydrogel that exhibits a VPT behavior (Park 1993). The stability of an immobilized enzyme was investigated at different temperatures that allow different degrees of collapse in the hydrogel matrix. It was hypothesized that the immobilized enzyme is more stable in the collapsed matrix due to the physical restraint imposed on the enzyme entrapped.

Temperature- and pH-sensitive hydrogels, based on NIPA and IA, were characterized for their sensitivity to the changes of external conditions and the ability to control the release of a hydrophilic model protein, lipase (Milasinovic et al. 2010). The hydrogels demonstrated protein loading efficiency as high as 95 wt.%. High dependence of lipase release kinetics on hydrogel structure and the environmental pH was found, showing low release rates in acidic media (pH 2.20) and higher at pH 6.80. The hydrogels were found suitable for releasing therapeutic proteins in a controlled manner at specific sites in the gastrointestinal tract.

Catalase was entrapped in PAAm, PSA, and poly(acrylamide-*co*-sodium acrylate) (PAAm-SA) gels (Jiang and Zhang 1993) and in thermally reversible

poly(NIPA-*co*-hydroxyethylmethacrylate) (NIPA-HEMA) copolymer hydrogels (Arica et al. 1999) and on a cross-linked macromolecular carrier of a polysaccharide structure (gellan) (Popa et al. 2006). The percentage of entrapment was found to be about 85%. The enzyme immobilized in PAAm has very low activity, while the enzyme in PAAm-SA exhibits the highest activity. The kinetic behavior of the entrapped enzyme was investigated in a batch reactor. The apparent kinetic constant of the entrapped enzyme was determined by the application of the Michaelis–Menten model and indicated that the overall reaction rate was controlled by the substrate diffusion rate through the hydrogel matrix. Due to the thermoresponsive character of the NIPA-HEMA, the maximum activity was achieved at 25°C with the immobilized enzyme. The K_m value for immobilized catalase (28.6 mM) was higher than that of free enzyme (16.5 mM). Optimum pH was the same for both free and immobilized enzyme. Operational, thermal, and storage stabilities of the enzyme were found to increase with immobilization.

BSA and lysozyme were embedded into the hydrogel volume of AAm-AAc, PNIPA, and NIPA-AAc by *in situ* and sorption methods from aqueous and phosphate buffer solutions (pH = 7.4, μ = 0.15 M NaCl) (Kudaibergenov et al. 2011). Oscillating the “on-off” release mechanism of proteins from the volume of PNIPA and NIPA-AAc hydrogels was observed in the course of cyclic shrinking and swelling of hydrogels in water and phosphate buffer at 25°C and 40°C (Figure 1.9).

Sorption of catalase by AAm-AAc, NIPA-AAc, and PNIPA hydrogels proceeds via diffusion. Equilibrium swelling degree of dry samples in the course of catalase sorption and the activity of immobilized enzyme are changed in the following order: AAm-AAc > NIPA-AAc > PNIPA (Tatykhanova 2009). It is explained by the fact that binding of catalase by hydrogel matrix proceeds via electrostatic interaction with participation of carboxylic groups of the network and amine groups of enzyme.

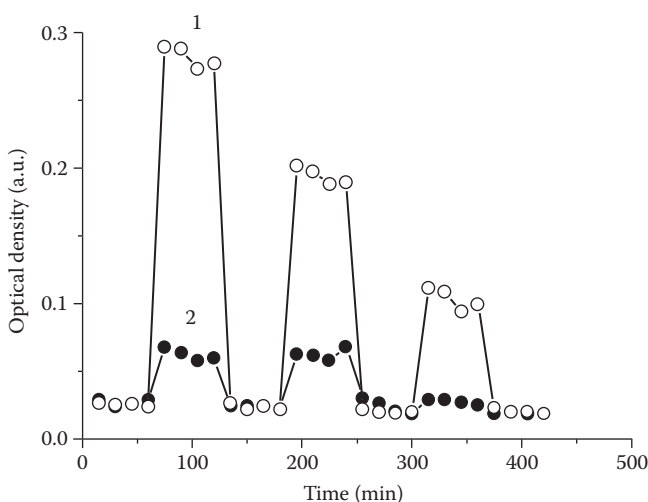


FIGURE 1.9 Time-dependent pulsatile release of BSA (1) and lysozyme (2) from PNIPAM hydrogel into phosphate buffer at 25°C and 40°C.

Maximal swelling and binding degree of catalase by hydrogels corresponds to neutral region. The relative activity of catalase encapsulated into AAm-AAc and NIPA-AAc networks after 74 days decreases two times, while the activity of catalase in solution decreases 46 times. The activity of immobilized and pristine catalase at temperature interval from 25°C to 70°C decreased 3 and 10 times, respectively. These results reveal that hydrogel-immobilized catalase preserves the catalytic activity for a long time and high temperature.

1.5 COMPLEXES OF LINEAR POLYAMPHOLYTES AND AMPHOTERIC GELS WITH TRANSITION METAL IONS

Renewed interest to polyampholyte–metal complexes is dictated by the fact that such complexes can model the protein–metal complexes and are relevant to catalysis (Bekturov and Kudaibergenov 1996, Casoloro et al. 2001, Khvan et al. 1985). For example, the kinetics and mechanism of complexation of AAC and vinylimidazole copolymers with Cu^{2+} , Co^{2+} , and Ni^{2+} ions are similar to the interaction of the carboxyl and imidazole groups of gelatin with the same metal ions (Annenkov et al. 2000, 2003). Polyampholyte–metal complexes are proved to exhibit catalase-like activity in decomposition of hydrogen peroxide (Bekturov et al. 1986, Lázaro Martínez et al. 2011, Sigitov et al. 1987) and to serve as hydrogenation or oxidation catalysts for organic substrates (Lázaro Martínez et al. 2008a,b, Xi et al. 2003). The ability of water-soluble or water-swelling polyampholytes to form stable chelate structure can be used for water treatment (Anderson et al. 1993) and recovery of metal ions from the wastewater (Ali et al. 2013, Chan and Wu 2001, Martinez et al. 2008, Rivas et al. 2006, Terlemezian et al. 1990, Xu et al. 2003) and polluted soils (Rychkov 2003). Amphoteric hydrogels, due to their high sorption and easy desorption of organic molecules and metal ions, coupled with durability and good mechanical stability, have potential applications in the removal of dyes (Dalaran et al. 2011) and recovery of metal ions from wastewater and in ion-exchange chromatography (Arasawa et al. 2004, Jiang and Irgum 1999). Amphoteric gel derived from ethylene glycol diglycidyl ether, methacrylic acid, and 2-methylimidazole has been complexed with Cu^{2+} and Co^{2+} ions (Lombardo Lupano et al. 2013, Martínez et al. 2011). The catalytic activity of this material was studied with respect to H_2O_2 decomposition. In the presence of polyampholyte–metal complexes, about 70% of methyl orange (model dye) was removed from distilled water in 2 h by oxidation with H_2O_2 , and about 80% of epinephrine (model drug) was converted to adrenochrome in less than 6 min, following a pseudo-first-order kinetic model.

1.5.1 COMPLEXATION OF POLYBETAINIC OR POLYZWITTERIONIC GELS WITH METAL IONS

Among the various types of polyampholyte–metal complexes summarized in Ciferri and Kudaibergenov (2007), Kudaibergenov (2002), Kudaibergenov (2008), Kudaibergenov and Ciferri (2007), less attention has been paid to metal complexes of cross-linked polybetaines or polyzwitterions (Kudaibergenov et al. 2006). The polybetaines (or “polyzwitterions”) are dipolar species, in which the cationic and

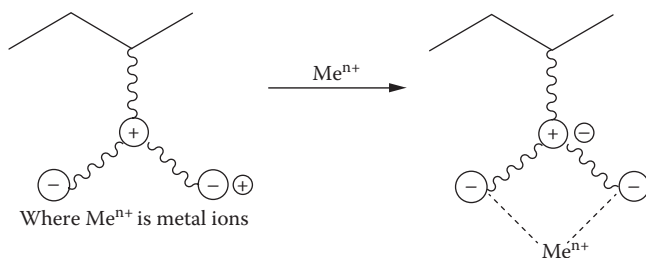


FIGURE 1.10 Simultaneous complexation of two units in CPZA is the driving force to capture Sr^{2+} ions.

anionic groups are separately bound to the same monomer unit and can be completely dissociated in a medium of sufficient dielectric permittivity. The most widespread chemical classes of polybetaines are carbo-, sulfo-, and phosphobetaines, that is, polymers with repeat units bearing simultaneously a quaternized ammonium group and a carboxylate, a sulfonate, or a phosphate group, respectively. As distinct from classical polybetaines, the research group of Ali (Ali and Haladu 2013, Ali and Hamouz 2012, Charles et al. 2012) developed novel polymers containing zwitterionic (\pm) and anionic ($-$) or cationic ($+$) groups such as poly(electrolyte-zwitterions) that have two negative and one positive charges (or two positive and one negative charges) in each monomer unit. The cross-linked polymer having zwitterionic/anionic group was synthesized via copolymerization of *N,N*-diallyl-*N*-sulfo-*N*-propylammonioethanoic acid and sulfur dioxide in the presence of cross-linker 1,1,4,4-tetraallylpiperazinium dichloride followed by hydrolysis with NaOH to convert poly(zwitterions) into cross-linked polyzwitterion/anion (CPZA) (Ali and Haladu 2013). Simultaneous complexation of two units in CPZA is the driving force to capture Sr^{2+} ions (Figure 1.10).

The removal of 87% and 92% of Sr^{2+} ions at the initial concentrations of 200 ppb and 1 ppm was, respectively, observed. Excellent adsorption and desorption capacity of CPZA would enable its use in the treatment of radioactive nuclear waste containing Sr^{2+} ions.

New amphoteric gels based on NIPA and amino acid (L-ornithine) were prepared by free radical polymerization in aqueous solutions (Marcin et al. 2010). The presence of NIPA and amino acid moieties imparts their multiresponsive character to temperature, pH, and metal ion complexation. The gels were found to be most sensitive to concentrations of copper ions in the range 10^{-6} to 10^{-5} M. As the amount of amino acid in the polymer network increases, the gels gradually lose their temperature sensitivity and become more sensitive to copper ion concentration. The VPTT decreases significantly after the addition of copper ions. Analysis of the UV-Vis spectra and the swelling behavior indicates that both 1:1 and 1:2 complexes are present in the swollen state of the gels, whereas the latter complex is more dominant in the shrunken state. It is concluded that the metal ion sorption ability, the temperature, and the pH sensitivity of amphoteric hydrogels make them interesting materials in terms of the temperature- and pH-triggered swinging of the binding strength of heavy metal absorbers.

Novel monomers containing amino acid residues were synthesized by condensation of the acetoacetic ester with glycine, β -alanine, and L-lysine in mild conditions (Kudaibergenov et al. 2007). Cross-linked polybetaines consisting of the amino acid moieties beside the carboxybetaine functionality were obtained via Michael addition reaction with participation of AAc followed by radical polymerization (Kudaibergenov et al. 2007). A series of polybetaine gels consisting of amino acid moieties (glycine, β -alanine, and L-lysine) were used to uptake metal ions from model solutions. Sorption of metal ions by hydrogels is accompanied by contraction and colorization of samples. At first, the thin colored layer on the gel surface is formed and it gradually moves into the gel volume. The driving force of this process is “ion-hopping transportation” of metal ions through intra- and intermolecular chelate formation, for example, constant migration of metal ions deeply into the gel volume by exchanging of free ligand vacancies.

1.5.2 METAL COMPLEXES OF AMPHOTERIC CRYOGELS

Cryogels are gel matrices that are formed in moderately frozen solutions of monomeric and polymeric precursors (Dinu et al. 2013, Mattiasson et al. 2010, Stein 2009). A system of large interconnected pores is a main characteristic feature of cryogels. The pore system in such spongelike gels ensures unhindered convectional transport of solutes within the cryogels, contrary to diffusion of solutes in traditional homophase gels. Semi-IPN cryogels based on cross-linked PAAm and anionic (Dragan and Apopei Loghin 2013) or cationic (Dragan and Dinu 2013) polyelectrolytes can serve as effective sorbents for the removal of dye molecules and metal ions. Amphoteric cryogels due to their response to temperature, pH, ionic strength, water–organic solvent composition, electric field, etc., belong to “smart” materials (Kudaibergenov et al. 2012b). A series of amphoteric cryogels with molar ratio of AAm, allylamine (AA), and methacrylic acid (MAA) (AAm:AA:MAA = 80:10:10, 60:20:20, 40:30:30, 20:40:40, and 0:50:50 mol.%/mol.%/mol.%) were synthesized (Kudaibergenov et al. 2012b, Tatykhanova et al. 2012). The structure and morphology of amphoteric cryogels and their complexation ability with respect to transition metal ions were evaluated. Cross and longitudinal sections of dry cryogels show spongelike porous structure with pore size ranging from 50 to 200 μm and the interconnected channels (Figure 1.11).

Complexation of amphoteric cryogels with transition metal ions is accompanied by colorization and slight shrinking of samples (Figure 1.12a). This is due to the formation of coordination and ionic bonds between metal ions and amine and/or

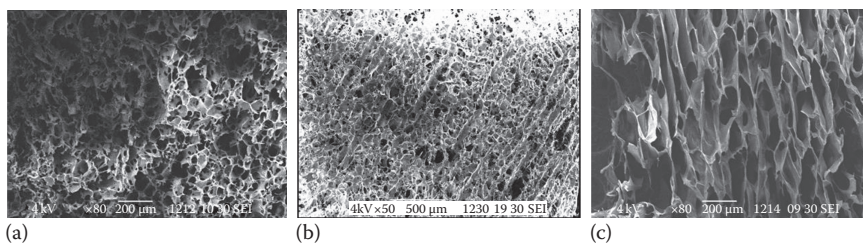


FIGURE 1.11 SEM images of cross- and longitudinal sections of cryogels with pore size (a) 50, (b) 100, and (c) 200 μm .

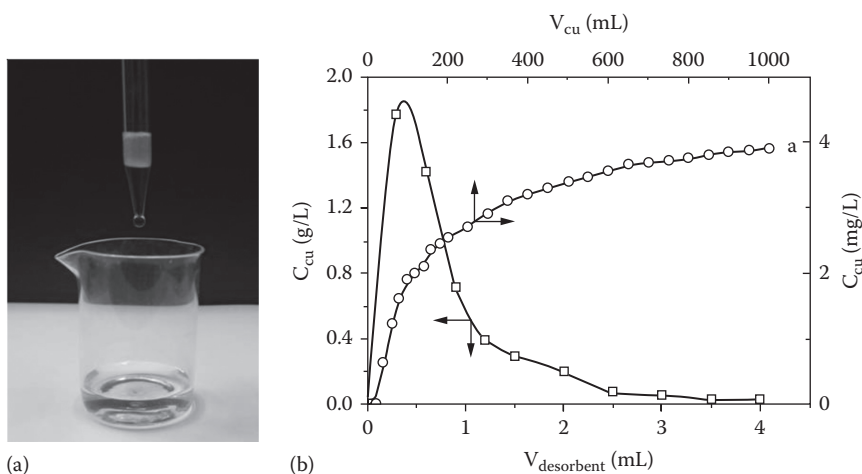


FIGURE 1.12 Sorption (a) and desorption (b) of copper ions by amphoteric cryogel ACG-334.

carboxylic groups of cryogels when aqueous solutions of metal salts pass through the gel specimen. The dynamic sorption capacity of amphoteric cryogels with respect to copper, nickel, and cobalt ions was evaluated. The amount of adsorbed metal ions varied from 99.17% to 99.55%. Dynamic exchange capacity of cryogels was in the range of 350–400 mg/L. Desorption of metal ions from cryogel volume was provided by disodium salt of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid. The extracted amount of metal ions was equal to 75%–80%. Figure 1.12b demonstrates the adsorption and desorption curves of copper ions by amphoteric cryogel.

Preferentially, the adsorption of Cu^{2+} ions (79%) in comparison with Ni^{2+} (38%) and Co^{2+} ions (32%) from their mixture was also observed from aqueous solution containing 10^{-5} mol/L of metal ions indicating the specific binding of copper ions. High adsorption capacity of amphoteric macroporous gels with respect to metal ions may be perspective for purification of the wastewaters and analytical purposes. The reduction of cryogel–metal complexes by NaBH_4 leads to the formation of nano- and micron-sized particles of metals and/or metal oxides immobilized on the inner and surface parts of amphoteric cryogels (Figure 1.13). The chemical composition of the Ni-containing sample by energy-dispersive x-ray attached to SEM revealed that up to 34 wt.% of Ni particles is formed.

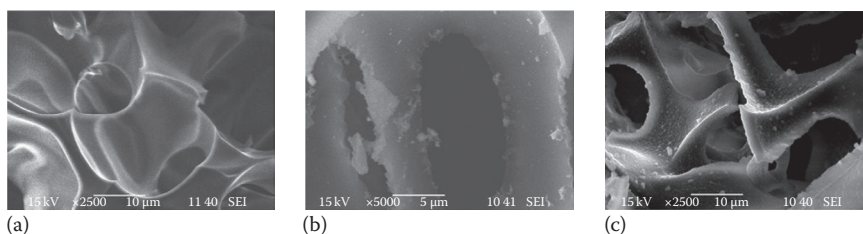


FIGURE 1.13 SEM pictures of pristine (a) ACG-334/copper(II) complexes, (b) ACG-334/nickel(II), and (c) ACG-334/cobalt(II) complexes reduced by NaBH_4 .

The following advantages of amphoteric macroporous cryogels with respect to metal ions are outlined: (1) Adsorption of metal ions can be provided in static and dynamic regimes; (2) adsorption and desorption processes are simple, for example, metal containing aqueous solution or desorbing agent is passed through the sample with definite rate; (3) high adsorption capacity of cryogels is due to the presence of complex-forming ligands (amine and carboxylic groups) and highly developed inner and outer surface; (4) the trace amount of metal ions may be concentrated up to three orders; (5) immobilized within macropores, metal ions can easily be reduced by reducing agents, and afterward cryogels might be used as flowing catalytic microreactors.

1.6 MOLECULAR IMPRINTED HYDROGELS FOR RECOVERY OF METAL IONS

Molecular recognition processes found in nature have always inspired scientists to mimic these systems in synthetic materials such as molecular imprinted polymers (MIPs) (Bergmann and Nicholas 2008, Byrne et al. 2002). MIPs and molecular imprinted hydrogels (MIHs) are commonly accepted in literature as synthetic approaches to design a precise macromolecular architecture for the recognition of target molecules from an ensemble of closely related molecules, while molecular imprinted technology (MIT) or molecular recognition technology (MRT) can be defined as engineering applications of such materials. Molecular imprinting involves forming a prepolymerization complex between the template molecule and functional monomers or functional oligomers (or polymers) (Wizeman and Kofinas 2001) with specific chemical structures designed to interact with the template by either covalent (Wulff 1995) or noncovalent chemistry (self-assembly) (Mosbach and Ramstrom 1996, Sellergren 1997), or both (Kirsch et al. 2000, Whitcombe et al. 1995). In the last decade, there has been an exponential increase in the number of papers describing molecular imprinting technique that creates memory for template molecules within a flexible macromolecular structure (Byrne and Salian 2008). Cameron et al. (2006) comprehensively surveyed over 1450 original papers, reviews, and monographs, starting from the pioneering work of Polyakov (1931) to show the fundamental and engineering aspects of molecular imprinting science and technology for the years up to and including 2003. According to the Web of Knowledge database searched up to 2012, ca. 13,000 papers have been published on molecular imprinting. Several remarkable reviews (Buengera et al. 2012, Byrne and Salian 2008, Hendrickson et al. 2006, Mayes and Whitcombe 2005, Romana et al. 2012, Tokonami et al. 2009, Vasapollo et al. 2011) were published with the aim to outline the molecularly imprinted process and present a summary of principal application fields of molecularly imprinted polymers, focusing on chemical sensing, separation science, biochemical analysis, drug delivery, catalysis, microfluidic devices, and analytical purposes.

The nature of the interaction between the functional monomers and the template with the formation of the complex has both covalent (covalent molecular imprinting) and noncovalent (noncovalent molecular imprinting) characters. Covalent molecular imprinting refers to imprinting of preorganized systems

where the monomer–template complex is formed by the covalent interactions. Pioneering works of Nishide and Tsuchida (Nishide et al. 1976) and Kabanov (Kabanov et al. 1977, 1979) served as the fundamental basis for the imprinting of metal ions to MIPs. Such kind of polymeric sorbents made from natural and synthetic materials is widely used for the recovery of metal ions from the wastewater (Ahmadi et al. 2010, Bessbousse et al. 2012, Birlik et al. 2007, Chauhan et al. 2005, 2009, Ge et al. 2012, Godlewska-Zytkiewicz et al. 2012, Kowalczyk et al. 2013, Li et al. 2010, Orozco-Guareño et al. 2010, Panic et al. 2013, Wawrzekiewicz 2013). Noncovalent imprinting belongs to imprinting of self-organizing systems in which the prepolymerization complex is formed by hydrogen, ionic bonding, hydrophobic and π – π interactions, as well as the van der Waals forces (Andersson and Mosbach 1990, Dunkin et al. 1993, Nicholls et al. 1995, Sellergren et al. 1985). The noncovalent imprinting approach seems to hold more potential for the future of molecular imprinting due to the vast number of compounds, including biological compounds, which are capable of noncovalent interactions with polymerizable monomers. These noncovalent interactions are easily reversed, usually by wash in aqueous solution of an acid, a base, or organic solvents, thus facilitating the removal of the template molecule from the network after polymerization.

The commonly accepted procedure for immobilization and leaching of imprinted metal ions is (a) *mixing* solutions of the functional monomer with a print molecule to afford the corresponding complex as the template, (b) *copolymerization* of the monomer–metal complex with the cross-linking agent in the presence of the initiator, (c) *washing* the crude copolymer to remove unreacted functional monomer, and (d) *leaching* the print molecule from the template to afford the MIP. Novel ion-imprinted polymers (IIPs) were used for selective solid-phase extraction of Cd(II) (Fan et al. 2012, Li et al. 2011, Singh and Mishra 2009), Pb(II) (Behbahani et al. 2013), Cu(II) (Chen and Wang 2009, Shamsipur et al. 2010), and Ni(II) (Saraji and Yousefi 2009) ions from aqueous solutions. The imprinted metal ions were completely removed by leaching with 1 M HNO_3 or 0.01 M EDTA in 0.5 M HNO_3 . Compared with nonimprinted polymer particles, the IIP had higher selectivity for metal ions. New IIPs for selective sorption and separation of Cr(III) (Birlik et al. 2007), Fe(III) (Xie et al. 2012), Ru(III) (Godlewska-Zytkiewicz et al. 2012), Nd(III) (Jiajia et al. 2009), and Au(III) (Ahamed et al. 2013) were synthesized. The IIPs for separation and preconcentration of UO_2^{2+} ions were obtained (Ahmadi et al. 2010, James et al. 2009). The applicability of IIP materials for the removal of emerging toxic pollutant uranium from uranium mining industry feed simulant solution is successfully demonstrated. An Al(III)-ionic imprinted polyamine functionalized silica gel sorbent was prepared by a surface imprinting technique for selectively adsorbing Al(III) from rare-earth solution (An et al. 2013). The adsorption of Th(IV) was studied using novel dibenzoylmethane MIPs, which was prepared using acryloyl- β -cyclodextrin as a monomer on surface-modified functional silica gel (Ji et al. 2013).

The Ni(II)-dimethylglyoxime (DMG)-IIP was encapsulated in polysulfone and electrospun into nanofibers with diameters ranging from 406 to 854 nm

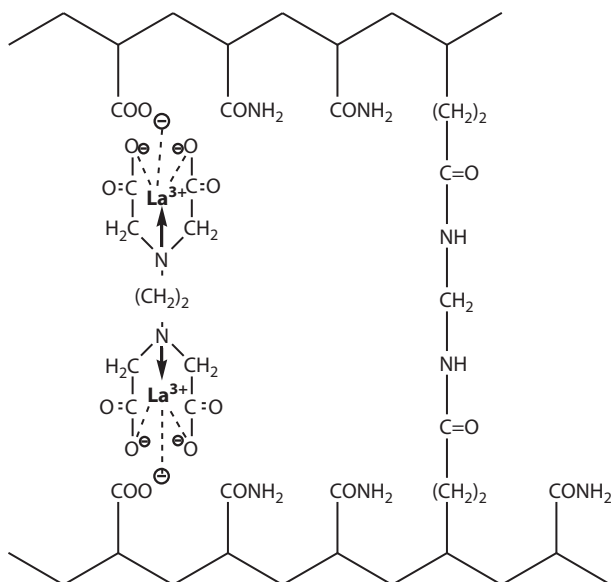


FIGURE 1.14 Scheme of immobilization of EDTA in AAm-AA hydrogel under *in situ* polymerization conditions.

(Rammika et al. 2011). The recovery of Ni(II) achieved using the Ni(II)-DMG imprinted nanofiber mats in water samples was found to range from 83% to 89%, while that of nonimprinted nanofiber mats was found to range from 59% to 65%, and that of polysulfone from 55% to 62%. The MIH was synthesized by immobilization of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid–La(III) complex ($[\text{EDTA}]:[\text{La}^{3+}] = 2:1$ mol/mol) within AAm and AAc hydrogel matrix via *in situ* cross-linking polymerization (Bekturganov et al. 2010) (Figure 1.14).

It is expected that the EDTA–La(III) complex in hydrogel matrix is stabilized by electrostatic interaction between carboxylate anions and metal ions. After leaching out of La(III) ions by 0.1 N HCl, the MIH sample was used for recovery of trace concentration of rare-earth elements (REEs) from the real solution (Table 1.1).

Sorption of REE was also performed by commercially available Russian-made cation exchanger KY-2-8H (Smirnov et al. 2002) (Table 1.2).

TABLE 1.1

Sorption of REE by MIH Sorbent from the Real Solution

Sorption	Initial Concentration of REE, mg/L						
	La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Y	Dy	Gd
Stock solution	0.024	0.23	0.041	0.036	0.26	0.35	13.84
After sorption by MIH	0	0	0.04	$16 \cdot 10^{-3}$	0.028	$5 \cdot 10^{-4}$	13.17
Sorption degree, %	100	100	0	95.5	89.25	99.86	4.84

TABLE 1.2**Sorption of REE by KY-2-8H Cation-Exchange Resin from the Real Solution**

Sorption	Initial Concentration of REE, mg/L							Total
	La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Y	Dy	Gd	
Stock solution	—	0.46	0.065	0.061	0.23	0.20	6.54	7.556
After sorption by KY-2-8H	—	0.29	0.065	0.021	0.032	0.13	4.75	5.291
Sorption degree, %	—	36.96	0	65.67	86.08	35.00	27.37	70.02

Comparison of the sorption effectiveness of REE by cation exchanger KY-2-8H and MIH is in favor of the latter. Excepting for Pr and Gd, the EDTA-immobilized hydrogel sample adsorbs from 89% to 100% of REE during 20 min. Ammonium salt of EDTA was also used as an eluent in selective separation of REE (Lu, Sm, and Y) by ion-exchange resins based on iminodiacetic acid (Moore 2000). In spite of selective separation of REE by iminodiacetic resin in hydrogen form, the disadvantage of this process is the multistage character that consists of transferring of iminodiacetate resin at first to hydrogen form, then to ammonium form, saturation of iminodiacetate resin by REE solutions, and elution of REE by EDTA.

1.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thus, the literature survey shows that the “smart” composite hydrogel materials are a fast developing and emerging field of polymer science. Synthetic and natural polymers including inorganic polymers, micro- and nanogels, metal nanoparticles, high- and low-molecular-weight ligands may be embedded into the hydrogel network, resulting in improvement of the mechanical properties and biocompatibility, making them as carriers for the controlled release of drugs and as catalysts, and providing stimuli-sensitive compositions. Structure, morphology, and physicochemical and physicomechanical properties of composite hydrogel materials are determined by both network structure and immobilized substances. The composite hydrogel materials can be applied in medicine, biotechnology, catalysis, environmental protection, and oil industry.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Allylamine
AAc	Acrylic acid
AAm	Acrylamide
AAm-AAc	Acrylamide and acrylic acid
AAm-SA	Poly(acrylamide- <i>co</i> -sodium acrylate)
AgNPs	Silver nanoparticles
AMPS	2-Acrylamido-2-methyl-1-propanesulfonic acid
ARPDs	Asphaltene–resin–paraffin depositions
AuNPs	Gold nanoparticles
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
CPAM	Cationic polyacrylamide

CTS	Chitosan
CTS-g-PAAc/MMT	Chitosan-g-poly(acrylic acid)/montmorillonite
Dex-MA	Methacrylated dextran
DLS	Dynamic light scattering
DMG	Dimethylglyoxime
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
FTIR	Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
GE	Gelatin
IIP	Ion-imprinted polymers
IPN	Interpenetrating polymer network
MAA	Methacrylic acid
MB	Methylene blue
MBAA	Methylenebisacrylamide
MIH	Molecular imprinted hydrogels
MIP	Molecularly imprinted polymers
MIT	Molecular imprinted technology
MMT	Montmorillonite
MRT	Molecular recognition technology
NIPA	<i>N</i> -Isopropylacrylamide
NIPA-AAc	<i>N</i> -Isopropylacrylamide and acrylic acid
NIPA-IA	<i>N</i> -Isopropylacrylamide-itaconic acid
NIPA-HEMA	Poly(isopropylacrylamide- <i>co</i> -hydroxyethylmethacrylate)
PAAc-B-FeCo	Poly(acrylic acid)–bentonite–FeCo
PAAH	Poly(acrylamide) hydrogel
PdNPs	Palladium nanoparticles
PEI	Polyethyleneimine
PNIPA	Poly- <i>N</i> -isopropylacrylamide
PVP	Poly(<i>N</i> -vinyl-2-pyrrolidone)
PVP gel	Poly(<i>N</i> -vinyl-2-pyrrolidone)gel
PSA	Poly(sodium acrylate)
REE	Rare-earth elements
SA	Sodium alginate
SEM	Scanning electron microscopy
SS	Silk sericin
TON	Turnover numbers
VPTT	Volume-phase-transition temperature
w.r.	Weight ratio
XRD	X-ray diffraction

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10 Chapter 10: Mixed-Mode Sorbents in Solid-Phase Extraction

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11 Chapter 11: Interpenetrating Polymer Network Composite Hydrogels and Their Applications in Separation Processes

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